

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT • 2ND DISTRICT

Scott Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-7748 • Fax: 517-373-1387
E-mail: senmscott@senate.michigan.gov • www.senate.mi.gov/scott



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Contact: Sen Martha G. Scott
Phone: (517) 373-7748

INVEST FEDERAL DOLLARS IN SOLVING CLIMATE CHANGE PROBLEMS, NOT IN WARFARE

LANSING- Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park)

LANSING, Michigan - Our country is facing a challenge to our security that may well overshadow every other threat it has faced in modern history. And it has nothing to do with world politics; but everything to do with our world climate. As our planet gradually heats up, it gets harder and harder to sustain our population; as resources dry up and tensions mount, our nations are ever more insecure and unstable.

Now is the moment when we must face the challenges of climate change, and devote resources to addressing them. On a conventional battlefield, when generals perceive a new threat emerging on, say, their right flank, they will naturally pivot their forces to confront it. Tackling the security threat of climate change will require immediate and drastic reductions of our greenhouse emissions.

This will take, among other things, a lot of money. If the security threat is as great as the military now says it is, it will be necessary to pivot substantial resources to address it.

What this means right now is that we must shift our "security dollars" - away from the military and toward programs to slow and halt climate change. If we do not do this now, we face a future that is insecure for our country, and for the world.

When the next Congress puts together the new federal budget, they must start to change our federal budget priorities toward the direction of "real" security, which now means stemming climate change.

Climate change is a global problem that can only be solved through international cooperation. However, we are currently doing little to assist other countries in their efforts to slow climate change.

In fact, our country now allocates the smallest share of the current climate budget to working on the problem internationally; for example, the money we provide to assist other countries in their energy transition: \$212 million. Meanwhile, the federal budget allocates \$9.5 billion to international military security assistance.

In other words: We devote 50 times as much to arming the rest of the world as to helping it prepare for and avoid climate catastrophe.

And if you look at the climate change budget closely, you find more problems. Nearly half of the budget is allocated to an (unproven) strategy for mitigating the effects of existing coal-fired power generation infrastructure, rather than assisting in the transition to cleaner renewable energy sources. Most of the rest is devoted to promoting U.S. technologies that may or may not be the most suitable to the recipients' needs.

As we look forward to a new administration and a new Congress, we must urge them to consider the real nature of "international security," and devote resources to what really makes us all safer.

Our federal budget spends money in some crazy ways. One of these is the way we spend our "security dollars." We spend over half our discretionary budget on the Pentagon - leaving all the other programs to divvy up the rest.

The imbalance is likewise severe in the budgets for technology development and international assistance. We spend \$20 to develop new weapons systems for every \$1 we spend on new clean energy and energy-saving technologies. And we spend \$50 to sell and give away U.S.-made weapons around the world (mostly to undemocratic regimes) for every \$1 we spend to help the rest of the world reduce emissions and deal with the current effects of climate change.

We can change this. What should the federal spending portfolio of a climate change industrial policy look like?

Let's begin with the (extremely poor) baseline of our current climate change budget. As described by the Bush administration's Office of Management and Budget, it has four parts:

- Technology Program: \$3.9 billion
- Science Program: \$1.8 billion
- Energy Tax Provisions: \$1.4 billion
- International Assistance: \$212 million

The necessary changes to this budget, in broad outline, are no brainers. First of all, this funding needs to be drastically expanded.

As our country faces the challenge of climate change and what it means for us and the world, we must consider the major sources of that change. Surely, individuals contribute a great deal to the problem; but we are not the only ones. The truth is that the military plays a huge role in creating greenhouse gas emissions; and must play a huge role in reducing that role.

Climate change will create enormous problems for the U.S. military, as the military itself has confirmed. We are almost certain to see widespread instability as a result of the effects of warming: scarcity of food and water, displaced populations, citizen unrest, and more. The consequences of climate change will affect the organization, training, and equipping of the military services.

The U.S. military contributes to the problem of climate change more than any other single institution worldwide. The military consumes vast amounts of energy resources.

A soldier in Gulf War I needed four gallons of fuel a day to support him; in 2006, each soldier dispatched to Iraq and Afghanistan required 16 gallons of fuel a day. That figure will likely go up - in 2007, the military energy bill rose from \$10.9 billion to \$13 billion, burning 340,000 barrels of oil a day.

We cannot solve the problems of climate change without addressing how our military uses resources.

Please send this message to the new administration and Congress when they consider the new federal budget.

The country's recent foreign policy of leading with one (the military) and largely ignoring the other (climate) are the two most prominent causes of our country's loss of standing in the world. Shifting federal spending between military and climate security will help to repair the damage to our international reputation. It will also provide resources necessary to get serious, finally, about addressing the major challenge of our time.

To do what's necessary to slow (and, hopefully, halt) climate change, we need serious investments in new technologies, alternative energy sources, and more. That money is available in our military budget, which currently eats up 54 percent of the discretionary federal budget. We are still pouring billions into weapons systems that were designed to fight the Soviet Union during the Cold War; we could easily afford to channel that money into things that would make our country and our world much safer.

Senator Scott represents the 2nd Senate District, which includes areas of Detroit and the cities of Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Highland Park and all of the Grosse Pointes. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee. Visit her online at www.senate.mi.gov/scott/.

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